The University of Chicago

THE DIPLOMACY OF THE ROMANIAN WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE (1875-1878)

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

1937

By

RICHARD VOYLES BURKS

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In many respects the nature of the Balkan crisis of 1875-1878 is fairly well understood. The significance of the creation of Bulgaria, of the occupation by the Dual Monarchy of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and, above all, the import of the Congress of Berlin for the future of Europe has been expounded, from the diplomatic point of view at any rate, in numerous monographs and articles. One aspect of the crisis, however, has been well-nigh uniformly overlooked, and this represents an important lacuna. For the course of Romanian history in these years presents the historian with another piece in the pattern of nineteenth-century nationalism: Romania became a nation in much the same sense that Italy had become a nation in 1861 and Germany in 1871. It is true that in the case of Romania this nationalist awakening was not accompanied by a successful movement toward unification. The Greater Romania longed for by the Radicals did not become a reality until forty-one years after the Congress of Berlin. But the awakening was there, nevertheless, expressed in an apparently useless war for an independence Romania already had de facto and was almost certain to acquire de jure. To appreciate properly the significance of this war for independence it is necessary to have some understanding of the Romanian scene at the time of the uprising in the Herzegovina. This will involve brief indications of Romanian national psychology, the internal political situation, and the diplomatic position of the Romanian government as of July, 1875.

I

The most marked characteristic of Romanian psychology is most aptly designated as a national inferiority complex, or, to speak more accurately, a feeling amongst the boyars (the landed aristocracy which constituted the ruling class) that Europe looked down upon them as effete, cowardly, corrupt, and religiously bigoted. The boyars came by their inferiority complex quite naturally. For centuries their country had been subject to foreign tutelage--Turkish, Russian, and most recently French. Ro-

manian culture, consequently, had become a hodge-podge of oriental and occidental elements. This fact was well-illustrated in the streets of Bucarest itself, where it was easy to meet within a short distance the finest Parisian carriage and a wagon drawn by buffaloes.

But the most significant contrast created by this cultural confusion was a differentiation of the aristocracy and the peasantry similar to that which existed in Russia. The peasant was eastern and backward. The boyar, at least on the surface, was occidental. He usually spoke French. He dressed in the latest Parisian fashion. More often than not he had been educated in the great cities of the occident, where he had become acquainted with western ideas on politics, literature, and art. But much of this occidental culture was veneer and the boyar was unconsciously aware of the fact. Hence that feeling of inferiority which was shortly to become a salient factor in Balkan politics.

As to the internal political situation: Ostensibly, Romania was a constitutional monarchy. The prince, Carol I, was a Hohenzollern, intensely proud of his origin. Though hardly a brilliant man, he worked hard and possessed (what was a rare quality in Romanian political life) a large amount of common sense. His energies were concentrated on the achievement of three aims. He wished to make his wobbly throne more stable. He wished to inspire his strange people with a sense of national dignity. But above all he desired to end his vassalage to the Turkish sultan, for such an achievement would at the same time secure his throne and help cure his people of their feeling of inferiority. The goal of independence he had pursued obstinately for nearly a decade; to that end he had created a modern and well-equipped army.

The chief political parties were also interested in independence, though the Conservatives, who were in office at the time of the Herzegovinian outbreak, eschewed an adventurous foreign policy and proposed to achieve the goal by diplomatic drudgery. They had, for example, negotiated a commercial convention with Austria-Hungary in the face of British and Turkish opposition, in this way gaining legal recognition of Romania's right to conclude international conventions without reference to the suzerain court. And this despite the fact that the convention opened Romanian markets to a flood of Austrian manufactured goods and would have made Romania an economic vassal of the Danubian empire, had

not Bucarest negotiated similar agreements with other powers. The Conservatives thus destroyed, for a minor gain, any prospect of a native industrial development for more than a decade.

The Radicals, on the other hand, were less willing to await the results of a cautious and roundabout diplomacy. Led by Bratianu and Rosetti, both ardent followers of Mazzini, the Radicals were the dominating element in the National Liberal (or opposition) coalition, and they did not hesitate to preach insurrection in the hope of turning out the Conservative cabinet, now in its sixth year of power. Besides desiring independence, Bratianu and his followers aimed to create a Greater Romania, one which should include within its boundaries the four million Romanians living in such foreign provinces as Transylvania, the Banat of Temesvar, Bessarabia, the Bucovina, and the Dobrudja. In a sense, therefore, the Radicals wished Romania to essay the role of a Balkan Piedmont.

Before July, 1875, the international situation offered little prospect for the achievement of any of these aims. It is true that the bonds of Turkish vassalage were almost imperceptible, that they consisted mainly of an annual tribute of 920,000 francs and an obligation to act in concert with the Porte in protecting Dacian boundaries against invasion. For all practical purposes Romania had been independent since 1866, even to the point of prohibiting the importation of Turkish goods. Yet Romania was a petty principality, hardly more than 120,000 square kilometers in area. The great majority of her five million inhabitants were peasants. She had no industry to speak of; even such commodities as soap, candles, and coarse cloth had to be imported. Obviously Romania could not do much for herself.

Yet there was little prospect of foreign help. For one reason or another, the government at Bucarest was regarded with hostility by nearly every great power in Europe. Russia, for reasons of prestige, had her eye on the three southern districts of Bessarabia which she had been forced to cede to Romania at Paris in 1856. Great Britain was backing the Porte as against Russia's designs on Constantinople and viewed with apprehension any forward action on the part of Romania. France considered the principality a German satellite. Yet the German government was very much at loggerheads with the cabinet at Bucarest. A Romanian railroad system was being built with German capital. The financ-

ing company was on the point of bankruptcy, but the Conservatives, who were under no obligation to rescue it, refused to do so without an adequate quid pro quo, and an angry Bismarck threatened diplomatic reprisals. Finally, the Porte could not regard Romania's aspirations for independence nor the cabinet of Vienna her dreams of a Greater Romania with equanimity. All told, Romania's chances for complete independence were a highly negligible quantity. Then in July, 1875, a revolt flared up in the Herzegovina.

II

For the first ten months of the crisis Romania remained aloof from the conflict. The natural caution of the Conservatives was reinforced by the attitude of the great powers who, for the most part, desired to localize the uprising. Only once was there any indication that Bucarest might depart from its attitude of passive neutrality. In January, 1876, the cabinet informed the powers that Romania might have to defend her neutrality by force should a foreign power, in attempting to aid the Christian rebels, try to march its army through the principality without the latter's consent. This pronunciamento was partly an answer to a Russian threat of occupation, but it was also the result of pressure from certain Conservative factions in parliament. (The representatives of the Liberal coalition had resigned their mandates as a protest against the Austrian commercial convention). But parliament, perhaps influenced by the precipitous drop in the value of Romanian bonds which had followed the issuance of the circular, immediately deserted the ministry, while the reaction of the great powers was unmistakably hostile. The Conservative cabinet therefore beat a retreat, in April virtually reversing the stand it had taken in January.

Meantime circumstances were gradually preparing the way for a decisive change in Romanian foreign policy. The strength of the Conservative party was steadily diminishing. It had been unable to settle the railroad problem to the satisfaction of the German government and, in December, 1875, Germany threatened to break off diplomatic relations. Furthermore, conditions within the Turkish empire were rapidly antiquating the Conservative policy of complete abstention. The Porte was obviously incapable of putting out the flames of revolt unaided, European diplomacy seemed

powerless to end the crisis, and the intervention of Serbia and Russia appeared increasingly imminent.

The decisive factor in the cabinet's ultimate fall, however, was Prince Carol, who saw in the Balkan imbroglio the long-awaited opportunity to strike for independence. The prince was not content to seek the coveted goal by diplomatic means. He desired that independence be achieved as the result of a victorious war. Yet the Conservatives were unprepared for any such adventure and the Radicals were making it abundantly apparent that a war for independence was impractical--not to say dangerous--so long as they remained in opposition. To be safe, the war must be conducted on the Italian model and this formula made Tsar Alexander of Russia equivalent to Napoleon III, and Bessarabia to Nice and Savoy.

The loss of a province, however, would be a grievous blow to a young dynasty in a turbulent country. "If Prince Carol should accept such a thing," snarled Rosetti's Românul, "he would sign his abdication." Obviously Carol's dangerous enterprize required the co-operation of the Radicals. The prince, moreover, was perfectly aware that Bratianu and Rosetti, habituated to stirring crowds, could excite the country's dormant patriotic feelings and give to the execution of the princely design all the appearances of an heroic national movement. From the beginning of 1876 Carol hastened the fall of the Conservative cabinet.

Early in February the cabinet began to totter. Parliament had weakened its diplomatic position by pushing it into the forward démarche of January and then deserting it. Its financial position was rendered increasingly precarious by a decline in railroad and tariff revenues caused by the Balkan crisis. Its control of the legislature was gradually undermined by the Crédit foncier rural, a financial organization controlled by the Radicals, which offered liberal credits to mortgage-burdened deputies who would vote against their own government. During the first days of February the ministry was forced to reorganize. In the reapportionment of portfolios two men completely devoted to Prince Carol's policy slipped into office and one of these shortly revealed the existence of a deficit of thirty million lei which the Conservatives had hitherto hidden from the country. This disclosure forced the premier to dissolve the senate. Then Carol (under pressure of Rosetti's threat of revolution, it is true)

promised Bratianu a fair election--a very broad hint (in view of the nature of Romanian elections). Though the new senate contained a feeble Conservative majority, the cabinet immediately resigned. The National Liberal coalition now attempted to impose upon the prince a ministry of their own selection. But Carol was unwilling to see Bratianu in control of the war department and, by resorting temporarily to a ministry of generals, he forced the coalition to let him have his way. At last on May 9, a coalition cabinet was formed under the leadership of Iepureanu. Bratianu had to content himself with the ministry of finance. Though the Radicals constituted only one faction in the coalition government, the period of passive neutrality had ended.

At the same time events within the Turkish empire seemed to favor a more adventurous policy. Five days before the formation of the Iepureanu government, there had been an uprising in Bulgaria and this was followed by the famous massacres. At Saloniki the French and German consuls were murdered by a Mohammedan mob and war vessels of the great powers appeared in the harbor. In Constantinople a mass movement of softas led to the overthrow of the Grand Vizir and the Sheik-ul-Islam. At the end of May the Young Turk party replaced the half-crazed Abdul-Aziz with the drunkard Murad V, who soon went completely insane. Obviously, the moment for intervention was drawing near.

For the next twelve months (with a single exception) the Romanian government followed what might be described as a policy of active neutrality. While loudly avowing that it was absolutely neutral, the government nevertheless attempted to extract concessions from the harassed Turks by threats of intervention and, as time wore on, actually prepared the way for an agreement with Russia covering the march of Russian armies through Romania.

Iepureanu's first task was to reassure a sceptical Europe that a cabinet of which Ion Bratianu was a member really intended to keep its hands in its pockets. To this end a serious endeavor was made to keep Bulgarian revolutionaries from using Romanian soil as a basis of operations. The government even went so far as to investigate or uncover Bulgarian bands in Braïla, Cladova, Giurgiu, and Oltenitza. Late in June the Serbs threw in their lot with the Christian rebels, but Bucarest remained ostentatiously aloof and adopted strong measures to prevent the shipment of arms through Romania to Belgrade. An observation corps was posted

on the Serbian border in order to protect neutrality against untoward events.

Meantime Foreign Minister Cogalniceanu sought to extract from the Porte a quid pro quo in return for Romania's virtuous attitude. He began by demanding the neutralization of the Danube between Negotin and Verciorova, towns which marked the limit of the Serbo-Romanian frontier. His alleged motive was a desire to avoid complications which might compromise his country's neutrality, his real aim to prevent the Turkish navy from shelling Belgrade. The Turks sought to temporize, but in July were forced to give way by Cogalniceanu's threats of intervention.

The next step was to present the Porte and the powers signatory to the Treaty of Paris with a series of demands, among other things for the cession to Romania of the northern arm of the delta of the Danube and for Turkish recognition of the principality's right to conclude international conventions without the suzerain's assistance. These demands were also accompanied by threats of intervention: the cabinet went so far as to propose to parliament the mobilization of the army. This time, however, the bluff failed. The attitude of the powers was not encouraging, state securities fell off so heavily that for a time further governmental credit operations were impossible, and European public opinion was distinctly hostile. The ministry virtually withdrew its proposal for mobilization. The Porte, whose armies were winning victory after victory over the disorganized Serbs, found the Romanian demands quite untimely and on July 29, haughtily declared that, "for the moment, the Porte is occupied with more important things."

But Cogalniceanu was not yet ready to retreat. In August he sent off a circular which avowed that unless the great powers supported Romania's demands, her pro-Christian sympathies coul "be strong enough to oblige the Romanian government to depart from the line of conduct which it has marked out for itself." The pigmy was threatening the giants. It was too much. The chamber refused to follow the foreign minister. On August 4, the Iepureanu cabinet resigned and Romanian diplomacy began a retreat.

The fall of the coalition ministry was not due to blunders in foreign policy alone. It was also the result of the intrigues of the Radicals, who were not satisfied with half the political plum and who, moreover, wished to prevent Carol from reseating

the Conservatives once his aims were achieved. The dual task of cleansing the cabinet of its Liberal elements and ruining the Conservatives was accomplished by Rosetti; his success is attested by the twelve years of almost uninterrupted Radical government which began in 1876. His first step was to manipulate the electoral system so as to fill the chamber with Radical deputies. Then the new chamber was induced to impeach (on the flimsiest pretexts) the former Conservative ministers. The position of Iepureanu, who had at one time been a colleague of those ministers (though he was not actually included in the charge) was impossible. The resignation of the prime minister necessarily involved that of the entire cabinet. The fictitious prosecution was continued for many months until the reputation of the Conservatives was almost irretrievably blackened. Needless to say, the new ministry was entirely Radical in composition: Bratianu himself became premier. The place of the belligerent Cogalniceanu was given to Professor Ionescu.

The first business of the new government was to conduct the retreat in the field of diplomacy. Ionescu recalled the note which had threatened a departure from neutrality and ordered the Romanian diplomatic corps to await new instructions. The ministry roundly declared to parliament that "a strict neutrality, maintained by an incessant vigilance . . . . on the frontiers will be the object of our constant anxiety."

During August and the first half of September Romanian policy was not only reserved but anxious. Serbia was being soundly trounced by the Turks and, as the fall wore on, Russian arms and Russian volunteers sought to make their way through Romania to the embattled Serbs. Bratianu's position was ticklish. Measures which the Serbs and the Russians thought too severe the Turks were ready to denounce as too lax. The government had no legal right to stop the volunteers, who eventually constituted an entire brigade in the Serbian army, but on the whole it succeeded in preventing shipments of arms. In fact, the Radicals had reverted to the Conservative policy of passive neutrality.

But only temporarily. In October and November Bucarest began to sound the powers on the subject of a neutrality similar to that which had been granted Belgium in 1839. The reason was cogent. The probability of Russian military intervention in the Balkan crisis was daily increasing. No doubt a Russo-Turkish war

would give Prince Carol an ally sufficiently strong to permit a safe but impressive blow for independence. But geography dictated that the Russians, in order to grapple with the Turks at all, must cross through Romania--and the convention of Paris (1851) bound Romania to ally with the suzerain power against an invading Russia. To oppose the Russians seriously--even with Turkish aid --was little short of suicide. Yet to violate the treaty which had, after a manner, created her would put the principality in very bad odor with Europe. The proposal for neutralization was an attempt to forestall the approaching impasse. If the powers agreed to neutralization, Romania's border would be closed to the Russian hosts. Since, furthermore, it would appear that to be neutralized a state must possess full sovereignty, the principality might automatically achieve that indendence she had so long been seeking. If, on the other hand, the powers refused, Romania could give way to the Russians without too seriously damaging her moral position before Europe; for it could then be argued that Europe herself had refused to help Romania carry out obligations which that country alone was powerless to fulfill.

In early November the moment for openly voicing the neutralization idea seemed to have arrived. The Serbs had been forced to conclude an armistice and the peace negotiations with Turkey had led to London's call for a conference of the great powers at Constantinople. It would be very useful to have the neutralization scheme placed on the agenda of the conference. Britain, moreover, appeared to favor the Romanian proposal. A special Romanian emissary managed to elicit from Lord Salisbury, recently appointed British plenipotentiary to the conference, the opinion that an invasion of Turkey by Russia would be considered a casus belli in London.

With the exception of Italy, however, the remaining po: ers threw cold water on the scheme. The German foreign office caustically suggested that, in case of war, "each must preserve himself as he . . . . thinks best." Yet December saw Dimitru Bratianu, brother of the premier, depart for Constantinople charged with carrying on the campaign. The agent was also instructed to ask for the cession of the Kilia (northern) mouth of the Danube. As was to be expected, the Turks refused to present the neutralization proposal to the conference while the various plenipotentiaries confessed that they had no instructions on the

matter. Salisbury, moreover, now declared that a protocol would not prevent the Russians from using the only practicable route to Bulgaria. Obviously, neutralization was a dead issue.

In January, 1877, however, Turkish diplomacy suddenly executed an about face and secretly began to support the Romanian campaign. Apparently the Turks had at last decided that a neutralized Romania would constitute an excellent addition to their moral armament; in event of war the invaders could be charged with the crime of wantonly violating a helpless neutral state. The Porte dispatched a special ambassador to London with instructions to convince the British of the usefulness of the proposal. But his efforts were unavailing. In one sense, then, Bucarest had suffered a diplomatic defeat. But in another sense it had gained a moral victory. The signatories of the Treaty of Paris had refused to help Romania carry out the obligations imposed upon her by that treaty. If war came, Europe could be assured that Bucarest had done her best and must now give way before irresistible force.

This white-washing policy, materially aided though it was by a quarrel over the new Turkish constitution, which Bucarest claimed constituted a derogation of her treaty rights, was by nature restricted to the domain of moral force. It had as its principal aim the justification of illegal steps which Romania would be forced to take. It therefore implied the existence of another line of action, one which would seek to deal with the more important field of physical force. While Foreign Minister Ionescu had sincerely worked for the neutralization of the country, Premier Bratianu had secretly carried out an entirely different policy, but one which was nevertheless intimately and sagaciously bound to that of his colleague. Bratianu's strategy recognized that a Russo-Turkish war was imminent and that, saving the intervention of a third power, Romania must ally with one or the other of the belligerents unless she wished to be crushed between them. That England would intervene was made unlikely by her failure to give effective support to the campaign for neutralization. England, moreover, was far away and, even if she fought, might not choose to defend the line of the Pruth.

Austria, on the other hand, was within striking distance, and should Austria intervene it might be safest to seek independence at the side of the Germans and the Magyars. In this sense Bratianu went to Sibiu in September, 1876, and called on the

Emperor Franz Joseph. The Habsburg monarch seemed benevolently disposed toward Muscovite policy. It was necessary, then, to make an agreement with Russia. But here arose the spectre of Romanian Bessarabia. Cogalniceanu had learned that at Reichstadt in July, 1876, the tsar had received from Franz Joseph the assurance that, in the event of a Serbian victory, Russia might acquire Romanian Bessarabia. The Serbs had been defeated, but the agreement augured ill for the future.

While Ionescu was beginning to plead with the powers for neutralization, the cabinet, under the pretext of preparing for annual maneuvers, ordered the mobilization of the Romanian army. Early in October, 1877, Bratianu, accompanied by the minister of war, paid a visit to Tsar Alexander, who was then staying at Livadia in the Crimea. Here negotiations were begun for a convention de passage. Though the conversations were secret, the visit itself could not be concealed from the public, and it helped provoke a financial crisis in Bucarest. In Europe it produced something of a furor. Great Britain suggested that Romania would do well to fulfill her treaty obligations loyally.

Nonetheless, when late November witnessed the surreptitious arrival at Bucarest of Ali Bey and Nelidov, the one to propose an entente against Russia, the other to negotiate a convention for the passage of Russia's troops, it was Nelidov with whom Bratianu clandestinely conversed. The conversations (of which the cabinet was kept in strictest ignorance) proved difficult. Bratianu was determined that Russia should sign a written promise on the score of Romanian Bessarabia; Nelidov was equally determined that no such guarantee be made. The upshot was a convention which contained no reference to Bessarabia and remained unsigned.

Meantime the campaign for neutralization had been continued. The conference at Constantinople seemed to offer hope for a pacific solution and this, coupled with urgent financial considerations, forced the cabinet to demobilize a large portion of the army. Furthermore, there existed in parliament a party which advocated neutrality at any price. Represented in the ministry by Ionescu, Sturdza, and Vernescu, the neutralists were willing to follow Vienna's advice and, in case of a Russo-Turkish war, simply withdraw the Romanian troops into the western half of Wallachia. The Austrian foreign minister guaranteed the political existence of Romania and promised to support the demands it had made on

Turkey. It seemed that Bucarest was on the point of reverting to the Conservative policy of diplomatic attrition.

In reality it was not so. The idea of neutrality at any price was the direct antithesis of the "blood and iron" policy advocated by Carol and Bratianu. Neutrality, furthermore, was altogether too dangerous. For the government at Bucarest to remain inert in the face of a Russian invasion would place the population of Moldavia and eastern Wallachia in the hands of the Russian military or, in case the Russians were defeated, at the mercy of Turkish irregulars.

In the early months of 1877, the neutralists were gradually forced out of the cabinet. Their position in the public eye was weakened by the new Turkish constitution, which case aspersions on the sovereignty of the government at Bucarest, and thus prepared popular sentiment for an agreement with Russia. The absolute refusal of the conference at Constantinople to listen to the proposal for neutralization was a crushing blow. In February Vernescu was dropped, in March Sturdza, and Foreign Minister Ionescu resigned in April. New elections for the senate rid that body of a strong Conservative minority, which might ask embarassing question when the Russian convention was brought into the light. The government was now completely dominated by the war party.

While the forces of the neutralists were being dispersed, negotiations for a convention with Russia had been brought to completion. It is true that Romanian political circles were greatly agitated by rumors of Russian designs on Bessarabia; but Vienna gave explicit assurances that she would not permit the acquisition of any Romanian territory, and St. Petersburg, fearing that otherwise the Romanians would refuse to sign, promised in writing "to maintain and to make respected the political rights of the Romanian state . . . . as well as to maintain and defend the present integrity of Romania." Apparently the Russians felt that Europe was hostile enough toward their war with Turkey in any case, and that if their armies entered the principality under the aegis of a previous agreement, they might avoid the additional stigma of having disregarded the rights of a small nation.

The Romanian government, however, still hesitated to affix its signature to the convention. When the tsar at last made his decision in favor of war (April 10, 1877), Carol mobilized his

army and called a crown council to discuss the matter. The results of this meeting were indeterminate, except that Cogalniceanu again became foreign minister. The truth was that Romania had little choice in the matter. The Russians were coming; there could no longer be any doubt about that, and it would not do to have an alien army pass through the country without an agreement which would keep the government from being ignored and the inhabitants from being plundered. If the Russians did not come as friends, they would come as enemies. As for Bessarabia, which was the real cause of Romania's hesitation, both Russia and Austria had given the most categorical assurances. Certainly, the doubts of the Romanian government were justified; by conventions signed on January 15 and March 18, 1877, Austria had agreed that, in the event of Russian victory, St. Petersburg should regain Romanian Bessarabia. In return, Vienna was to acquire Bosnia and Herzegovina. But Bucarest was ignorant of these agreements and, in any case, refusal to sign the convention would not have altered matters. On April 16, 1877, Cogalniceanu and Stuart (the Russian consul) initialled the convention de passage. Romania was now legally in rebellion against the Ottoman empire.

III

Henceforward the great aim of Prince Carol and Premier Bratianu was to get Romanian troops on to the field of battle. Romania would then be in a position to demand Turkish territory as compensation for her military efforts. Furthermore, armed intervention might be the means of retaining Bessarabia. The Romanian army, some fifty thousand strong, could render the Russians definite services and, if fortune were kind, might give them decisive aid. Should the tsar then demand the return of the province Bucarest would have a powerful moral weapon with which to defend itself. Russia could be made out before the tribunal of European public opinion as the betrayer of a small but valiant nation who had helped her defeat the Turk. Public opinion might be sufficiently aroused to prevent the retrocession.

But the paramount consideration, in the view of the Romanian government, was that active participation in the war would provide the nation with an opportunity to win its independence by fighting for it. Doubtless independence could be won without

bloodshed. Russia would probably win the war, and it was to her interest to weaken Turkey as much as possible. Conceivably the powers would sooner or later recognize Romanian independence, if that status were granted her by a victorious Russia. But such an outcome was highly undesirable. "The freedom and independence of peoples, these costly goods, are no gifts," an official of the princely court was later to assert. "Only by great sacrifice can they be purchased, and their foundation is only certain if it is sprinkled with the blood of heroes who have given their lives for the fatherland." By winning independence on the battlefield the Romanians would acquire a sense of national dignity and assert their will as a nation.

There were, however, many obstacles to overcome before Romania could join in the war. Europe viewed the Russian convention with suspicion, especially since, according to Article 8 of the Convention of Paris (1858) Romania was bound to assist the suzerain court in defending her soil against invasion. Europe must be convinced that the principality made war only as the result of Turkish aggression. Then, too, Austria and Russia were hostile. The Dual Monarchy could not look with favor on a campaign which might arouse the irredentist feelings of its Wallachian subjects. Nor would Russia willingly give Bucarest means to thwart a territorial ambition for which, in part, she was waging a dangerous and costly war. The Romanians had need of much good fortune.

They dealt with Europe first. The minister for foreign affairs announced that in the impending conflict Romania desired to remain neutral. She had concluded an agreement with Russia because she had no other choice. The guaranteeing powers had not seen fit to stop the Muscovites, and it was not the principality's business to attempt the impossible. The Russians merely crossed the country, and that with the tacit assent of Europe. Their action was no justification for the invasion which Turkey prepared; it was the moral duty of the guaranteeing powers to prevent such a catastrophe. If they did not, Romania would be forced to throw neutrality overboard and fight for her existence.

The powers found this argument none too convincing, and Great Britain especially saw no reason to interfere with the military operations of the Porte. The Romanian appeal, said the British foreign secretary, was put forward, not with the expectation

that it would or could be complied with, but with the view to laying the foundation for an understanding with Russia. There was no point in hampering the military operations of a power whose defeat would injure England's interests. Nor was Russia's attitude more auspicious. Her armies began to cross the border (April 23) before the chambers had assembled for the ratification of the convention de passage. Her commander-in-chief, the Grand Duke Nicholas, issued a proclamation directly to the Romanian people, much in the fashion in which the invasion of 1853 had been prefaced. The situation hardly augured well for the designs of the Radicals.

On the other hand, the precipitate entry of the Russian forces had the advantage, as far as Carol and Bratianu were concerned, of presenting parliament with a fait accompli. The stormy and bitter attacks of the minority were helpless before the lack of any possible alternative. It was as the spokesmen of the cabinet said: the powers had refused to prevent the Russian invasion, by the terms of the convention Russia "assuages our fear, the great fear, the very great fear . . . . concerning that small portion of Bessarabia which has been restored to us by the Treaty of Paris," while the conclusion of a similar agreement with Turkey would have been equivalent to consenting that Romania should become the field of battle. The convention was ratified by a large majority (April 29).

By and large, the European press disapproved of this action. It maintained that Romania should have conformed with the treaties and made common cause with her suzerain. The chancelleries were also hostile. For its part, the Porte denounced the action as patently disloyal. The Romanian agent at Constantinople was "suspended" (as if he were a functionary of the Ottoman government), neutral shipping found in Romanian ports was confiscated, and the ill-famed Turkish irregulars raided the Wallachian littoral. On May 9, the Turkish guns at Vidin opened fire on the city of Calafat across the river. After waiting until the Osmanli had fired seven rounds, the Romanians replied.

In Bucarest national feeling ran high. The question of a declaration of independence was feverishly discussed. Românul, the principal journal of the Radicals, appealed to all Romanians of whatever party to place themselves "under the flag of the fatherland in order to emerge from this struggle as brothers . . . . in a free Romania!" And Bratianu, speaking before the chamber of

deputies, declared: "When we have shown that the Romanian manhood of today is not worth less than the ancient Roman manhood, we can be sure that neither England, nor Russia, nor anyone in Europe will regard us as a part of Turkey." Certainly the Turkish attacks presented a favorable opportunity for a declaration of independence and, besides, such a move would give pause to Russia, whose policy Romanian politicians viewed with considerable trepidation, for reasons which will soon become apparent. On May 11, parliament recognized that a state of war existed between Turkey and Romania and requested the cabinet to "take every measure to defend and assure the existence of the Romanian state, in order that Romania may emerge at the peace with a well-defined political position, and that the nation, subsisting of itself, may accomplish its historical mission."

This veiled affirmation of independence was in the nature of a trial balloon. But the powers were not interested in supporting an action which constituted a moral blow at the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and thus furthered the designs of Russia. The Austrian foreign minister asked London, Paris, Rome, and Berlin to withhold recognition of a declaration of independence, and the European press echoed the attitude of the governments. The Romanians nonetheless continued to discuss the declaration of independence. The press at Bucarest unanimously urged it, and the cabinet, after considerable hesitation gave way. On May 21, 1877, eleven years after Karl of Hohenzollern had ascended the throne, parliament adopted a resolution which declared Romania completely independent.

The enthusiasm with which the Romanian people greeted this event indicates that something of a national renascence was taking place. Since the first Turkish attack the boyars had been especially aroused. Young men of the best families enlisted in the army. Committees of women were organized to care for the prospective wounded; money was subscribed for ambulances; private individuals offered horses for the cavalry. The peasant, of course, had at first been inclined to view all this excitement with apathy. His patriotic sentiments had been considerably dimmed by centuries of misery and servitude. But the Bratianu cabinet had known how to put an end to this indifference; every village was given to understand that those who enlisted would receive land, and a law was passed requiring each village community to farm the acres of

its enlisted men. The peasant at once became a convert to the cause of national independence. And Carol, replying to the congratulations offered him by the chamber of deputies, referred to the former bonds of suzerainty and declared that "my election, my arrival . . . . the mission even of my reign, had no other signification than to free Romania from these."

Europe, however, was not pleased. Russia felt that the declaration of May 21 compromised her position and advised Bucarest that the problem of Turkish suzerainty should have been left to the peace conference. The French response was a pungent telegram. "We cannot but regret," it said, an "imprudent démarche" whose only effect was to strip Romania of the "the right to avail herself . . . . of the international guarantees which sheltered her." London and Berlin were almost equally hostile, while Rome was extremely reserved. For Turkey, of course, there was only one possible reply: she declared the United Principalities in a state of rebellion. Only in Vienna was there a disposition to view the situation favorably. While outwardly very reserved, Count Andrássy, the Austrian foreign minister, regarded an independent Romania as a possible outpost against Russian influence in the Balkans, and this despite the Magyars, who were greatly preoccupied with the peril of irredentism. Romania would now, he felt, perceive her isolation in the midst of the Slavic sea, and perforce would turn to Austria-Hungary for support. But whatever the attitude of the powers, Romanian independence, barring a Turkish victory, was now an accomplished fact. There remained, however, the need of consecrating the diplomatic victory on the field of battle.

Even before the signature of the convention de passage Carol had begun negotiations with St. Petersburg on the subject of Romanian participation in the war. These negotiations had proved to be particularly difficult and complicated, for in this regard the Russian government was of two minds. The chancellery, headed by Prince Gorchakov, had determined that Romanian infantry should not assist what it believed would be the facile progress of the Russian arms. Were the despised soldiery of Prince Carol to appear near a battlefield, Bucarest might be given a formidable moral weapon with which to oppose the retrocession of Bessarabia. Short of a general European war, the tsar was not disposed to yield on this matter. It was therefore wisdom to avoid shaking

a hornet's nest, and the Romanians might be given their independence as compensation for the loss of the province.

The military, on the other hand, wanted the Romanians to take part in the war--not, let it be understood, as an independent army under the command of a Hohenzollern prince, but as a Russian division at the beck and call of Russian officers. The reason for the attitude of the Russian general staff was cogent. Despite the Austro-Russian conventions of January and March preceding, Vienna was bitterly hostile to the war, and had gone so far as to mobilize part of the Austrian army. If, when the Russian armies crossed the Danube, Austria should attack the Russian rear, the Moscovites would be utterly helpless. To insure their line of march against this unpleasant eventuality, the Russian general staff had been forced to keep a number of divisions on the Galician border, thus greatly diminishing the forces available for operations in Turkey. Furthermore, the exasperated Osmanli had not idled away the four months which had elapsed since the dissolution of the conference at Constantinople. With English financial aid, they had proceeded to make of their army a formidable weapon of defense. While believing that Turkey in the long run could offer no serious resistance, the Russian general staff was not quite so convinced as the Russian foreign office that the campaign would resolve itself into a military picnic. From their point of view, it would be well to allow the Romanians, under Russian guidance, to escort prisoners, defend the line of supplies against Turkish irregulars, and thus release dependable Russian infantry for active service.

With the entry of the Russian troops, Carol had concentrated his forces east of the River Olt, so that in effect they would constitute the right wing of the Russian army. He was soon given to understand, however, that the tsar would allow the Romanian army to cross the Danube only under Russian command. At conferences between Carol and the Grand Duke Nicholas at Ploiești (May 14 and May 18) the Russian leader insisted on co-operation and incorporation, while the prince was equally firm in his intention not to commit what he believed would be political suicide. The result was a compromise: the Romanian army, under its own commanders, would assist the Russians to cross the Danube. The declaration of independence was, in a sense, a public affirmation of Carol's attitude.

Naturally the Russian government was vexed. St. Petersburg dispatched a stiff note, declaring that it was necessary to define precisely and formally the policy of the government at Bucarest, which could not vary between absolute abstention from every aggressive action and the incorporation of the Romanian in the Russian army. As for the results of this incorporation, the note continued, the community of aim and the traditional sympathies which united the empire and the principalities should constitute for the latter a sufficient guarantee of Russia's actions with regard to it. Shortly thereafter, Gorchakov guardedly revealed to the prince that Russia intended to demand the retrocession of Bessarabia. He added that he saw no necessity for the co-operation of the Romanian army. The Romanians at once prepared for an independent campaign in western Bulgaria, many miles from the zone of Moscovite military operations. When, on June 26, the Russians began to cross the Danube between Zimnicea and Sistov, Carol made ready to cross above Vidin. Russia, however, interposed a formal veto and declared that she would consider such a move an act of hostility toward herself.

For the moment the Romanians were baffled. They would not submit to incorporation, for that might mean political suicide. They could not disobey the commands of a great power whose troops marched through the length and breadth of the land. Yet they were determined to take part in the war. Gorchakov continued to insist that they were not to cross the river; the Grand Duke Nicholas was equally insistent on incorporation, and did not hesitate to resort to trickery to attain his ends. By successive calls for assistance at various points along the Romanian littoral, he sought to draw the Romanian army gradually and unobtrusively within the orbit of Russian operations, and thus render independent action on its part tactically impossible. When he discovered that Carol was not to be hoodwinked, the grand duke resorted to bluff. He ordered General Manu to garrison Nicopoli without further delay and to provide an escort for six thousand Turkish prisoners. Carol politely informed the Russian commander that it was beneath the dignity of his soldiers to play the part of gendarmes. It was evident that the Romanians were not to be ensnared.

A sudden, and dramatic, change in the military situation now gave them their long hoped for opportunity. While they had been hesitating on the left bank of the Danube, the Russian

armies had spread out fanwise across the sunburnt plains of Bulgaria. The plan of the high command was to hold the Turkish armies posted at Vidin and Rushchuk in check while General Gurko would march hastily to the Balkan mountains and secure Shipka pass. This pass the Russians considered the key to their campaign; once it was in their hands, the whole of Eastern Rumelia could be had for the taking, Turkish morale would be shattered beyond recovery, and Constantinople would be only a few weeks' march away. On July 19, Gurko occupied the pass. But the victory was short-lived, for the Turks had occupied the important junction of Plevna, a town some miles to the southeast of Nicopoli which commanded the Russian right wing.

On July 20, six thousand five hundred Russians, attempting to occupy Plevna, unwarily stumbled on to forty thousand embittered Moslem troops commanded by Osman Pasha. Aimlessly the Moscovites were hurled against an enemy six times their own strength; the Russian defeat was crushing, and over a third of their number was left on the field of battle. The position of the tsar's armies was now seriously, perilously endangered. Should Osman Pasha advance on weakly garrisoned Nicopoli and take it, the armies in eastern Bulgaria and at Shipka pass would be cut off from their base of supplies. Plevna must be taken at all costs.

But to take Plevna reinforcements were necessary and the shortage of troops made it imperative for the garrison at Nicopoli to march to the aid of the threatened wing. To release that garrison for action, the Romanians must occupy the fortress, and this time it was the Russian emperor himself who asked the Romanian prince to take possession of the place. Carol refused. The tsar ordered the mobilization of one hundred eighty-eight thousand reserves. But it would be weeks before they could draw near the scene of action. Defeat was imminent, while across the river stood thirty thousand fresh Romanian troops. Tsar, grand duke, and chancellor now demanded that the Romanians cross to Nicopoli. Carol merely agreed to garrison the place, which he did (July 29).

Next day the Russians launched a new attack at Plevna. Finding that the battle went against them they appealed to the garrison at Nicopoli for aid. Four or five fresh regiments might have turned the day in favor of the Muscovites, but General Manu

refused to move. For the second time the Russians were soundly beaten. Nicholas sent Carol a telegraphic appeal for aid. "The Turks . . . . overwhelm us," it pleaded.

The Romanian commanders hesitated. If they did not go to the aid of the embattled Russians, the results might easily be disastrous for Romania. If Osman took Vidin, the Turks would transfer the theatre of war to Wallachia; the devastation brought about by a retreating and demoralized Russian army could hardly be less than the ravages which a Turkish invasion would cause. On the other hand, the dispatch of Romanian troops to Plevna appeared to be no less dangerous than inaction. Assistance would mean operating within the Russian pale without having first secured a convention guaranteeing the independence of the Romanian army. Incorporation would be the inevitable result and it would be a perilous proceeding to confide Romania's sole means of defense to a government which intended to take Bessarabia. Yet to save the Russians from disaster might obligate St. Petersburg on the Bessarabian question in a manner which no treaty could do. Bratianu urged Carol to give way to Nicholas' urgent request. The prince, however, was convinced that the time for action had not yet come. Aside from the question of incorporation, there was another factor: Vienna had forbidden him to cross the Danube.

Probably the Austrian government feared that the prestige which might accrue to Romania as a result of her active intervention would increase the peril of irredentism. At any rate, the foreign office was seriously preoccupied with the Austrian attitude and from the beginning of July had worked to reverse it. By early August its efforts had been attended with success. Cogalniceanu, who had made a flying trip to the Ballplatz, was able to report that although Romania would not be allowed to annex the city of Vidin, Vienna would not oppose either the crossing of the Danube or the acquisition of as much of the Dobrudja as the Romanians desired.

But on July 31, when the Russians had lost the second battle of Plevna and Nicholas had sent his desperate telegram, Carol was not aware of the results of Cogalniceanu's mission. Urged on by his prime minister, but held back by the danger of incorporation and by fear of Austria's opposition, the Romanian prince sought to compromise by placing one of his four divisions under Russian command. When he learned that Austria had changed her

policy, Carol sent word to the grand duke that the Romanian army was ready to move on Plevna, provided they could march under their own commanders. Nicholas informed Carol that it was absolutely necessary "to subordinate to the authority of a single person all the troops which are collected in the western theatre of war."

The grimness with which the Russians clung to their policy in the face of two serious defeats is proof of the fear with which it viewed the prospect of receiving important assistance at the hands of an independent Romanian army. But the stubborn Hohenzollern refused to budge, and in the end he won his point. Repeated Turkish attacks jeopardized the Russian hold on Shipka pass, and if that point were lost, the possibility of a successful termination of the war in 1877 was slight. But the English had declared that if there were a new campaign in 1878 they would openly enter the lists on the side of Turkey. And that was not the worst of it. The tsar feared that the loss of the campaign of 1877 would mean a revolutionary upheaval in Russia. On August 21, Bratianu returned from Russian headquarters with a letter in which Nicholas consented to Carol's conditions of co-operation. Shortly thereafter the Romanian troops began to cross the Danube and make their way toward Plevna.

But the Russian general staff was still convinced that there must be absolute unity of command if the Turks were to be forced out of the entrenchments with which they had encircled Plevna. In an interview between the tsar, Nicholas, and Carol, which took place at Russian headquarters, the question of unity of command was at last thrashed out. Carol insisted on maintaining direct control of his thirty-five thousand men; accordingly Alexander had no choice but to offer him the command of the thirty thousand Russians already before Plevna. It would have been dangerous for Carol to refuse, even though unity of command implied the incorporation which he had so greatly desired to avoid. The fusion of the two armies was offset by the fact that the Prince of Romania had been given supreme command on what turned out to be the decisive battle field of the war. Only the most extreme need could have caused the tsar of all the Russias to turn over his troops to the ruler of a petty principality. It was proof that the Russians were as morally obligated to Romania as they ever could be. What was more, the army would find at

Plevna its baptism of blood and the independence declared in May would be sealed on the field of battle.

On September 11, 1877, the Romanian army took part in the third battle of Plevna. It was a terrible and yet significant scene which Romanian diplomacy had succeeded in staging. On the parapet above the Grivitza redoubt stood the Nizams firing stolidly, their immans behind them praying Allah for victory against the infidel. And up a steep incline, in the face of withering fire and half-lost in smoke, advanced the Romanian peasants. Time and again they came forward--to be thrown back with losses amounting to over forty per cent. At last, encouraged by Prince Carol himself, they reached the parapet and after a hand to hand encounter took the redoubt. It was the only permanent success of the day. Romanian diplomacy was at high tide.

A few quotations may illustrate the point. Said the London Graphic:

> There was one bright spot in the gloomy scene, the capture of the Grivitza redoubt . . . . . The chief glory in the capture . . . . has been unhesitatingly awarded to the little Roumanian army, which has thus taken its revenge for the contemptuous sneers which previous to this affair were ordinarily hurled at it.

Cried Constantine Rosetti, defending the foreign policy of the Bratianu cabinet in a speech delivered late in November:

> Today the Romanian nation has regained its self-assurance, the army has the certainty of its own worth, and all Europe was forced to admit that the Romanian soldiers were brave soldiers and their leaders real officers. Today the tsar wears on his breast the Star of Romania and calls the Romanians his brave allies. Romania must prove that she is not a nation which begs at the door of congresses for the crumb of independence, but a brave nation which knows . . . . how to die for its rights. Romania must show Europe that she is no mere geographical conception but a real bulwark of Christian civilization. She has supplied this proof.

And the speech from the throne (November 27) added: "The time of foreign tutelage, the time of vassalage is past, and Romania will be a free, an independent country."

Meantime action on the battlefields had continued. On December 10 the beleaguered and starving Turks attempted to make a sortie from Plevna. Probably they would have succeeded had it not been for the assistance of Romanian troops. The subsequent surrender of Osman Pasha meant the end of all serious Turkish resistance. In order to avoid the appearance of complete solidarity with Russia, Carol and his subordinates now planned a separate

campaign. They returned to their original objective, the taking of Vidin, in the hope of annexing the place and thus creating a Romanian bridge-head in Bulgaria. But the signing of the armistice at Kazanlik (January 31, 1878) found a Romanian division still hammering at the walls of the coveted city.

The cost of consecrating independence on the field of battle was high. Romania had spent more than 25,000,000 lei, and of the troops which had invaded Bulgaria, almost half (twenty thousand) had been killed or wounded in battle, or had died of disease. But Prince Carol did not think the price too great. "Today I have obtained what I wanted," the Hohenzollern wrote triumphantly, "I have shown Europe that I have made something out of Romania."

From the point of view of Romanian nationalism, however, there was one discordant note in this symphony of success: the fear that despite a successful war, the state might lose territory, the fear that Russia might demand southern Bessarabia. To be sure this contingency had been foreseen and diplomacy had sought to build entrenchments. Romanian troops occupied Nicopoli and Rahova, and the armistice was to let them into the key city of Vidin. Furthermore, the moral position of the Bratianu cabinet was unimpeachable. Russia had been forced to guarantee the territorial integrity of the principality and all Europe had been made aware of this promise. Romania had become the independent ally, almost the savior of Russia. Yet Russia was a great power; she had gone to war partly in order to regain Bessarabia, and Carol and his cabinet must have been aware that moral considerations were hardly binding on diplomacy. After a fashion, Romania had sought to play the role of a Balkan Piedmont. Could she avoid the loss of her Nice and Savoy?

IV

After the capitulation of Plevna (December 10, 1877), the Romanians tended to view the prospective peace negotiations with high hopes. Vidin, the Dobrudja, a guaranteed neutrality were all talked of, while some even looked forward to a union with Bulgaria or the proclamation of a kingdom. When, much to its surprise, the cabinet at Bucarest discovered that the Russians intended to include in the armistice the bases of the final peace,

it at once dispatched an emissary to Kazanlik, where the negotiations were taking place. The representative was to present five demands: recognition of independence, retrocession of the Danube delta, an indemnity of 100,000,000 lei, occupation of the Turkish bank of the Danube until the indemnity was paid and, finally, the destruction of the Turkish fortresses in northern Bulgaria.

Obviously, Bucarest was too optimistic. The Russians had decided, even before the fall of Plevna, on their course of action with regard to the troublesome principality. They would exclude her from the peace negotiations, recognize her independence, take Bessarabia, and compensate her with the Dobrudja and the Danubian delta. The Romanian emissary was politely told that he could not take part in the armistice negotiations. When he replied, in accordance with his instructions, that Bucarest would accept no agreement concluded without his participation, he was referred to St. Petersburg. At once General Ghika was dispatched to the Russian capital, to remind the tsar of his promises--"generous assurances which have for my country a higher value . . . . than the most formal treaties"--and the Russian consul in Bucarest was presented with a note which affirmed Romania's right to participate in the peace negotiations. Romania, the note said, had acquired the character of an independent ally in the course of the war, and it was her privilege to have a voice in the peace settlement. The tsar replied that the principality's claim was impossible; until Europe had recognized her independence, it was Russia's duty to watch over her interests. The implication was clear; the principality was to be asked for Bessarabia.

Henceforward the great endeavor of the Romanian government was to avoid paying the price for an independence which was already an accomplished fact. It first sought to forestall the demand, which it at last knew definitely would be made. The Porte was sounded on the question of an immediate and unilateral recognition of independence, in the hope that in this fashion Russia would be deprived of any legal right to Bessarabia as Ottoman soil. But Bucarest was given little time in which to effectuate measures of defense. On January 26, 1878, Grand Duke Nicholas announced the conclusion of the armistice (the terms of which were not revealed). On the same day St. Petersburg formally made known its intentions with regard to Romanian Bessarabia. The matter was one of national dignity and imperial honor, it was said.

Bucarest returned an immediate and formal refusal. "It is unworthy of a great empire to cheat thus a country which has suffered everything on the sole assurance that the word of an emperor was worth more than a treaty," asserted the Romanian government, and though "against force there is no resistance . . . . we believe that above force there is public opinion and the human conscience." The note of defense had been sounded; henceforth public opinion was the solitary hope and the political program of the Bratianu cabinet.

The rejoinder was equally indicative of the policy which St. Petersburg would follow in the future. "Whatever arguments you . . . . may invoke," said Prince Gorchakov, "you cannot modify our resolutions, for they are immovable; you stand before a political necessity."

The ensuing conflict was to be a struggle between moral arguments and the threat of brute force. But Russia was already engaged at close quarters with other powers and she first sought to compromise. Britain threatened to send her fleet into the Straits; Austria showed herself extremely hostile, and in case of war it might prove dangerous to have an inimical Romanian army posted squarely on the line of communications. Even if war were avoided, Russia's diplomatic footing was hardly such as to let her bear the moral blows of Bucarest with impunity. In short, St. Petersburg had a capital interest in reaching an amicable understanding with Bucarest.

To this end Count Ignatyev arrived in the Romanian capital on January 30. His first task was to make the Romanians understand that there was no possibility of saving Bessarabia. Then he offered concessions. If the Romanian government would give way with good grace, he let it be understood, it could obtain an increased portion of the Dobrudja, a war indemnity of 100,000 leĭ, and the city of Vidin. Ignatyev even suggested the possibility that Carol might be given the Bulgarian throne.

The Romanian government hesitated. The compensation which Ignatyev offered was enormous. To accept it would mean friendly relations with Russia, a port on the Black sea together with the key fortress of Silistria, a bridgehead in Bulgaria, an exorbitant pecuniary indemnity. The possible effects of Russian enmity were well illustrated by exclusion from the armistice negotiations, and it was extremely doubtful if any opposition, however strenuous,

could save Bessarabia from the Russian maw.

But the domestic situation was distinctly unfavorable to compromise. Rumors of Russia's demand had outraged Romanian public opinion; it was believed that the loss of the province would ruin the country, and all parties united in opposing both the demand and the proffered compensation. If the cabinet accepted Ignatyev's offer, it would probably be overthrown. Moreover the ministry was not unaware that Europe trembled on the verge of a general war. Austria had declared that unless the Russo-Turkish peace settlement were submitted to a congress of the powers, she would open hostilities. The British cabinet had made overtures to the Dual Monarchy for an alliance.

In such circumstances a decision was difficult. If the cabinet accepted the Russian proposals it risked its own existence. A refusal would provoke the enmity of a great power whose troops marched through the length and breadth of the land. Cogalniceanu wanted to give in, but Bratianu, who foresaw a general war, and Carol, who was determined to resist to the bitter end, overruled him. General Ghika was bidden to declare that there was no Romanian of any party who would sign a treaty of retrocession.

It was now St. Petersburg's turn to hesitate. Romania was evidently prepared to offer desperate resistance. The British fleet had received orders to enter the Bosphorus and Austrian mobilization appeared imminent. Gorchakov thought of inducing his master to give way on the Bessarabian question provided Bucarest would conclude a secret treaty for the passage of Russian troops through the principality. But such thoughts were cut short by a resolution of the Romanian parliament (February 8) which, after indirectly impugning the honor of the tsar, declared against the alienation of any part of Romanian soil for any compensation whatsoever. Ghika was informed that Romania might undertake what she pleased, but the tsar's decision remained unalterable.

Obviously, there was nothing to be gained by appealing to St. Petersburg. The cabinet at Bucarest therefore turned its attention to the approaching peace congress, in which, it was hoped, Romania might plead her case. Bucarest officially approached the powers on the subject on February 15, adding a request for recognition of its independence. But the reaction to this <u>démarche</u> was distinctly negative, and Carol made up his mind that Russia would "take the three Bessarabian districts from us amid the silent

assent of Europe." It seemed logical to seek a rapprochement with Russia.

Nevertheless, the Bratianu cabinet continued to resist with all the forces at its command, and the truth was that it had no choice. The Conservative opposition was giving it a taste of the treatment it might expect should it think of compromise. They asked that Carol abdicate rather than yield an inch of Romanian soil and made every effort to overthrow a cabinet whose moral right longer to represent the country they roundly denied. They pressed for the denunciation of every Russo-Turkish agreement which interfered with the principality's affairs and, in a furious parliamentary debate, forced from Bratianu a promise to use every means in his power to obtain admission to the coming congress.

Caught between the assaults of the opposition and the bull-dozing tactics of Russia (whose generals were now ignoring the very existence of a Romanian government), the Bratianu cabinet found new hope in the reaction of the powers to the Treaty of San Stefano. The Austrian government was enraged both at the creation of a large Slavic state to its south and because it had not been given Bosnia and Herzegovina. Britain demanded that the treaty be submitted to the powers for revision. The moment seemed propitious for a new offensive. On March 8, Bucarest announced that it would withdraw its troops from Bulgaria and, at the same time, sent to all the powers a memorandum protesting against the prospective retrocession. Again the reaction was highly unfavorable; France voiced the sentiments of the other powers when she declared openly that Romania could not be admitted to the congress.

The Russians, for their part, replied to the new Romanian offensive with a barrage of threats. Russian infantry began to occupy Bessarabia and the entire countryside assumed the appearance of a province occupied by enemy troops. On March 16, Gorchakov announced that, in spite of Romania's clamors, Russia's decision was irrevocable, that Russia would not introduce the Bessarabian question at the congress, that if another power wished to do so she would not support it, that if Romania did not give way Bessarabia would be taken by force, that if armed resistance were attempted the outcome would be fatal to Romania.

Great Britain had insisted that before she came to the congress it must be agreed that every provision of the Treaty of San Stefano should be submitted to the deliberations of the con-

gress. Since, furthermore, Article 19 of the treaty referred to Bessarabia, Gorchakov, whose government was desirous of avoiding war, had committed a serious blunder. The cabinet at Bucarest was quick to grasp the fact, and, while declaring that it would neither treat nor give way, publicized the chancellor's threat (made privately to General Ghika) throughout Europe. The meeting of the congress was postponed and a new and more perilous phase of the Eastern crisis opened.

Meantime the Romanian government, after three weeks of anxious waiting, had obtained (from the columns of a Russian newspaper) the text of the treaty of San Stefano. It was even worse than had been expected. The Porte, but not Russia, recognized Romania's independence. The Russian troops in Bulgaria (since the convention de passage was valid only for the duration of the war) were granted the right of passage through the principality for two years (Article 8). Finally, the Dobrudja was ceded to Russia, who, "not desiring to annex this territory and the islands of the delta, ... reserves the right of exchanging them against the parts of Bessarabia detached by the treaty of 1856." The cabinet at Bucarest naturally denounced this instrument; it declared to parliament that Romania could neither admit the passage of Russian troops, nor enter into any negotiations with regard to Bessarabia.

In the interval, the knowledge of Gorchakov's declaration that the Bessarabian question would not be submitted to the congress had created in Austria and Britain an attitude more favorable to the principality. Furthermore, Andrássy obtained large war credits from the Delegations, while the British fleet had anchored in the Straits. These events, and others of their ilk, gave the outraged Romanians new hope; late in March Bucarest launched its third and last drive against St. Petersburg. The powers were informed that Romania could not consider herself bound by the Treaty of San Stefano. Justice, it was added, prescribed that the principality's fate should not be decided by the congress in the absence of Romanian representatives. To follow up this démarche, Premier Bratianu left Bucarest for Vienna (March 28).

St. Petersburg riposted with another threat. If Romania protested against Article 8 of the Treaty of San Stefano, Gorchakov told Ghika, the tsar would order the principality occupied and the Romanian army disarmed. For the second time the aged

chancellor, half-hysterical from the pressure of events, had overstepped the mark. Secret negotiations between Germany, Austria, and Russia had disclosed that the Dual Monarchy would agree to Russia's occupation of Bulgaria only provided communication through Romania was forbidden the army of occupation. The Romanian government learned from its agents that real support could be expected for opposition to Article 8, and it promptly announced that it would meet force with force. A new note, the most biting of the whole acerbic struggle, was dispatched to the Russian capital, contrasting Romania's sacrifices in the war--the blood of her sons, her Danubian villages in ruins, her population infected with epidemics--with the treatment meted out at San Stefano.

The Russians were forced to retreat. The indignation provoked in London and Vienna by Gorchakov's threats left them no alternative. Giers, the Russian foreign minister, informed General Ghika that Prince Gorchakov "may have used words which did not express his thoughts or were contrary to them." The chancellor himself denied to the British representative that Russia would oppose the discussion of the Bessarabian question at the congress. St. Petersburg announced that it was sending to Bucarest a special ambassador charged with negotiating a new convention de passage. Russia would try to present the powers with a fait accompli on the subject of Article 8.

Meanwhile Bratianu had appeared at Vienna. Unfortunately his arrival coincided with that of Count Ignatyev, who came to lay the basis for an Austro-Russian rapprochement. Since, in these circumstances, Austria had nothing to gain by opposing the retrocession of Bessarabia, Bratianu met with a reception which was none too encouraging; he was told that he must apply to Bismarck. The Romanian premier therefore travelled to Berlin and endeavored to resuscitate the theory of the Danube as a German river and to establish a solidarity between the interests of Prince Carol and those of the Hohenzollern dynasty. Bismarck merely urged his visitor to reach an understanding with Russia. Austria and England, he intimated, had an interest in Romania's making difficulties for the Slavic power, but that interest marked the limit of their support.

Bratianu, however, was not in a position to accept Bismarck's well-considered advice. A new convention de passage was not concluded, especially since the cabinets at London and Vienna

declared that they could not consent to the continued use of the principality for military communications. St. Petersburg's reply was to increase the Russian contingent in Romania. An iron circle commenced to close on Bucarest. What was more, Russian officers made topographical studies in the Carpathians. The Romanians became thoroughly frightened. A foreign occupation was trouble enough, but an Austro-Russian war on Romanian soil would be a national catastrophe. Prince Carol prepared to concentrate his army in Little Wallachia, on the Russian rear. The chambers pressed for the transfer of the government to Craiova and the cabinet thought of acceding to the demand. Cogalniceanu sent off an official protest; but the powers, as usual, were indifferent. At St. Petersburg it was explained that since Romania had protested against Article 8, Russia must take steps to safeguard the troops in Bulgaria against attack from the rear. If these measures alarmed Romania, she had only to conclude a new convention de passage. Ghika retorted that a new convention could be violated as easily as the old.

Yet the Russians were in no position to provoke their erstwhile allies unnecessarily. The English fleet rode at anchor in the Straits. A reorganized Turkish army camped under the walls of Constantinople. The Russian forces south of the Balkan chain were demoralized and revolts had flared up in Thessally, Epirus, Macedonia, Crete, the Rhodope mountains, and Bosnia. Having failed to reach an agreement with St. Petersburg, Austria now tried to stiffen Romanian resistance, in order to make the Russians more amenable to her demands.

The government at Bucarest continued its preparations for war. It decided that the Romanian army should take up a defensive position in Little Wallachia. It asked the chamber for war credits amounting to three million lei (the deputies voted four millions), and Prince Carol travelled through Little Wallachia inspecting the entrenchments of the Romanian troops. In Bucarest the populace converted Romania's first independence day (May 22, 1878) into a demonstration against Russia. In reply, the Russians moved on Piteşti and Târgovistea--points which were outside the communication zone allotted to them.

Meantime the attention of the Romanian government had been concentrated on events at Berlin, where the European areopagus was about to assemble. Carol wished to effect a fundamental

change in Romanian policy. In April his father had written him that the endeavor to arouse European public opinion sufficiently to force Russia to reverse her attitude had failed, and the prince now pled with Bratianu and Rosetti for a direct understanding with Russia. But Bratianu continued to believe that war would break out and that, in the ensuing mêlée, Bessarabia could be snatched from the Russian maw. Rosetti was equally adamant. Stuart's last minute proposal of direct negotiations was therefore rejected. When Bratianu and Cogalniceanu left for Berlin in the early days of June, it was with the hope of saving Bessarabia by obtaining admission to the congress. In addition, they intended to ask that the Russian troops should be withdrawn from Romania, that her independence be recognized and her territory neutralized, and that, finally, she be granted the Danube delta, Vidin, Silistria, and an indemnity.

Such claims indicate that the Radical cabinet had lost touch with realities, that it failed to comprehend the true nature of the congress, which in the main, met only to ratify decisions already reached by direct negotiations in London, Vienna, and St. Petersburg. Actually, Austria and England, the two powers who alone had evidenced some slight desire to support Romania, had used the principality as an object of barter. In a secret Anglo-Russian agreement, signed on May 30, England had agreed not to oppose the retrocession of Bessarabia in return for Russian concessions which protected her own interests. Austria had long since signed a written promise to the same effect--contingent, of course, on the acquisition of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

When the European assembly convened at Berlin on July 13, 1878, the fate of Romania had been virtually decided. Until their appearance before the congress on July 1, Bratianu and Cogalniceanu wandered uselessly from one plenipotentiary to another. "In politics," Beaconsfield warned them, "ingratitude is frequently the reward of the best services." And yet a sudden turn in the diplomatic wheel of fortune now almost altered the apparently fore-ordained result of the Russo-Romanian struggle. Probably the fact was hidden from Bratianu and Cogalniceanu, but in the private conversations which preceded and very largely determined the course of each plenary session, it was suddenly discovered that the Austrian delegates opposed the retrocession of Bessarabia. Andrássy was holding out for a higher price. In addition

to the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, already promised him by the Austro-Russian conventions of January and March, 1877, the Austrian foreign minister now wanted an extension of the zone of occupation beyond the Mitrovitza river and the right of eventually annexing these territories. It was a high price and Nelidov scurried off for consultation in St. Petersburg. After long and painful conversations Emperor Alexander yielded.

Bessarabia was irretrievably lost. But this was not the worst of it. During the course of the regular sessions Bismarck proposed that Romania's independence be recognized only on condition that the principality accept the territorial exchange demanded by Russia. Beaconsfield entered a formal protest, but the congress made haste to accept Bismarck's proposal, especially since the Russians had let it be known that their adhesion to the treaty of peace would be doubtful if Bessarabia were not given them. There remained the question of compensation. Desiring to separate Russia and Bulgaria as far as possible, the powers suggested that Romania's share of the Dobrudja be increased by the addition of Silistria and the port of Mangalia. The Russians agreed to Mangalia but balked on the question of Silistria, so that the ownership of the key fortress was left in doubt. Eventually it was given to Bulgaria. The compensation allotted at San Stefano was thus increased at Berlin by 1,750 kilometers.

Besides the exchange of territory, the powers imposed a second condition the fulfillment of which was a prerequisite to the recognition of Romanian independence. Again it was Bismarck who proposed that Romania first grant civil rights to her Jewish population. In taking this step the German chancellor was not acting from humanitarian motives but for reasons strictly in accord with his conception of Realpolitik. In the first place, the Reichstag had refused to ratify a commercial treaty with Romania, on the grounds that its terms did not provide sufficient protection for German Jews who lived there. Bismarck was thus left with the alternative of obtaining such protection or suffering a reversal in foreign policy. Secondly, the chancellor sought a device by means of which he could force Bucarest to come to the aid of the German railroad interests in Romania. What could be more effective than to delay the much coveted recognition of independence? The other plenipotentiaries, though for different motives, were not slow in agreeing to the chancellor's proposal.

With respect to Russia's right of passage, the Romanians had better luck. The Russians had to agree to withdraw from the principality within a year from the signing of the peace. They promised, moreover, to repatriate their army in Bulgaria by sea, rather than overland, across Romania. The Romanians owed this piece of good fortune largely to England and Austria, who aimed to cut off Russia's land route to the Balkans. The same influences again manifested themselves in the discussion relative to the status of the Danube. The Austrians proposed neutralizing the river from the Iron Gates to the delta. They asked also for the continuation of the European Danubian Commission. This time, however, the Russians countered with a proposal for the demilitarization of the river. The plenipotentiaries were unable to reach an agreement, except on the continuation of the international commission and the admission of Romania thereto, though eventually the Russian proposition was accepted. In the last sessions successive attempts were made to force Romania to accept arbitration in the matter of the dedicated convents, to upset the Jewish settlement, and to capitalize the tribute of Romania and Serbia, who should pay the resulting total to the Turks. All these proposals were defeated.

The decisions reached by the Congress of Berlin signified that Romanian diplomacy had been routed. Of the hopes which Bucarest had cherished, well-nigh every one had been proved illusory, or fulfilled on conditions which were equivalent to defeat. The congress had merely sanctioned a state of fact already created by Russian policy despite Romania's opposition. Bessarabia was lost, and the independence which the Romanians believed themselves to have won on the field of battle recognized on terms which they regarded as humiliating.

The first of these conditions--acquiescence in the retrocession of Bessarabia--proved that Romanian policy had overreached itself, since this proviso was obviously the result of Romania's desperate resistance to the demands of Russia. The compensation which was offered seemed insufficient. True, the acquisition of the mouths of the Danube was a gain of great economic and political significance, but the Romanians considered this accession as a recovery of what rightly belonged to them. It is also true that the Dobrudja was of greater economic value than Bessarabia, for the principality now had a port on the Black Sea.

But Romanian diplomacy persisted in believing that the economic advantage was outweighed by the political loss, and besides, had thought it possible to gain the one while avoiding the other.

The second condition--the emancipation of the Jews--resulted partly from the failure of the Radicals to solve the railroad problem, though it is conceivable that Occidental humanitarianism might have caused the imposition of this restriction in any case. Nonetheless, by giving the Israelites a legal right to foreclose the mortgages which they held to the greater share of Moldavia, Jewish emancipation would dangerously dislocate the economic life of the principality and might give rise to serious anti-Semitic disorders. To avoid what they viewed as a national catastrophe, the Romanians in the end were forced to let the Iron Chancellor have his way about the railroads.

With respect to other matters, Romanian diplomacy was hardly more successful. The limitation of Russia's right of passage was certainly a boon, but it was the result of the action of one or another of the great powers and not of Romanian policy. The same must be said of the demilitarization of the Danube and of Romania's acquisition of representation in the international Danubian commission. Her demands for neutralization and an indemnity were passed over in silence, and admission to the congress, for which she had so ardently striven, effected nothing.

The emotions which the Treaty of Berlin produced in Bucarest may be imagined. A people which had spent their blood and money in a war for independence could view its terms only with feelings of despondency. Their manifestations were those of a nation condemned. The government was forced to act energetically to prevent the outbreak of disorders. The chambers were prudently closed on July 17, and reopened only when the excitement had considerably abated. Romanian authorities were quietly withdrawn from Bessarabia and, in 1879, a constituent assembly altered the constitution so that it technically conformed to the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin without emancipating the country's four hundred thousand Jews. Two years later Romania's independence was definitely recognized.

The war for independence had a profound effect upon Romanian national life. Common struggle, common victory and disaster firmly cemented the dynasty and the nation, creating thus a greater degree of internal stability. Hatred and distrust of

Russia, engendered by the experience of the peace negotiations, proved to be the governing factor in Romanian foreign policy for a generation, creating and maintaining an alliance with the Dual Monarchy. But there was a more significant result than either of these, one which proved that Romanian diplomacy was not quite the failure which the Treaty of Berlin seemed to indicate. For it must be remembered that both causes and consequences of the war for independence were basically psychological. Turkish suzerainty was merely a convenient excuse. The war had been fought--not for independence, for that the Romanians already had in all but name --but to demonstrate to Europe that the nation was not effeminate. Knowing from the beginning that Russia intended to take Bessarabia, Carol, Bratianu, and Cogalniceanu were forced to oppose the Russian demand by that very nationalism which their policy aimed to foster.

The great result of the war for independence, the result which diplomacy sought and won, was the fact that Romania found herself. At the storming of Grivitza the peasants and nobles of Moldo-Wallachia were welded into a nation. They had shown Europe they could fight and they felt that they henceforth had a right to existence as a nation. As a young Romanian officer explained to a foreigner in September, 1878:

> Yes, this war has been disastrous. But it has not been fruitless. It is to the bravery of the Romanian soldiers who fell at Plevna that we owe the consideration which was lately begrudged us, and which today no one can refuse us. Europe, before the Balkan campaign, considered us . . . . a nation . . . . of debauchees, of rakes. We have demonstrated on the field of battle that the grandsons of Rudolph the Black and Dragosh have not degenerated.

When Carol was crowned king in the cathedral at Bucarest on May 22, 1881, the new crown was made from the metal of Turkish cannon captured at Plevna. On the National Order of the Crown of Romania were inscribed the words Prin Noĭ Însine, that is, "through our own efforts." This phrase became, and has remained, the emblem of Romanian nationalism.